

CPYRGHT

EDITORIAL COMMENT

A rebuff in Argentina

The difficulties faced by the United States in its effort to prevent a Communist take-over in South America were underlined Sunday by the election in Argentina.

To the apparent surprise of the United States State Department, the CIA, and the major news services, the followers of former dictator Juan Peron walked away with the election.

Peron, now in exile, held the Republic of Argentina in a Mussolini-type dictatorship for some ten years. While the type of his dictatorship was considered to be fascist-like rather than communistic, he had the loyal support of the masses of Argentine citizens.

His dictatorship was ended by a revolt of the high military leaders of the nation.

Since then Argentina has been ruled under the guise of a republic by a civilian government but with the military looking over its shoulder.

President Frondizi is a respected statesman. But the tip-off on who ruled the country was provided early in February when he was forced by the military, against his better judgment of popular will, to join the U.S. sponsored drive to break diplomatic relations with Fidel Castro's Cuban regime.

His judgment of popular Argentine sympathy for Cuba and antipathy toward the U.S. and the Alliance for Progress has been vindicated by the election.

In it the Communists and pro-Castro forces joined with the remnants of the Peronistas to overwhelmingly defeat the government candidates.

The news out of Argentina yesterday was that the military is demanding that Frondizi refuse to recognize the election of the Peronista candidates.

The United States is faced with some hard choices.

Military dictatorship has been abhorrent to us as a people. Will we support the Argentine military, who express the will of the wealthy ruling class, and who in turn give no indication of initiating any of the civil reforms called for by the Alliance for Progress?

Will we champion the right of majority opinion as expressed by the voters of Argentina, though they have indicated their scorn for our intentions?

This indication of the alienation of the Argentine people, together with the rapidly deteriorating situation in Brazil which may lead to chaos there, provide unmistakable evidence of the size of our Latin-America problem.